

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 9-17 and 19-22 are now present in this application.

Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 9-11, and 14-17 have been amended, claims 8 and 18 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 19-22 have been presented. Reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-18 stand objected to for certain informalities. Because these informalities have now been addressed, it is respectfully requested that this objection now be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 1-18 stand rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

It is respectfully submitted that, as originally presented, the claims particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the instant invention. This should not have been a 35 USC 112 rejection but, at most, an objection. Nonetheless, in order to expedite prosecution, the foregoing amendments have been made. The Examiner has questioned in claims 6, 7, 15 and 16, whether two platforms are claimed. As noted by the Examiner, claims 1 and 10 have only recited a single platform. This has been retained in the independent claims. The dependent claims recite "the platform" but, as the Examiner is aware, this could be two platforms. Nonetheless, the phrase "each" is no longer used in these dependent claims.

Again, it is respectfully submitted that the claims particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the instant invention. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 USC 112, second paragraph rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5 and 10-14 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,915,276 to FELL. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 6-7 and 15-16 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over FELL in view of WESTHAVER et al., U.S. Patent 4,499,788. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge that the Examiner considers claims 8-9 and 17-18 to contain allowable subject matter, provided the 35 USC 112, second paragraph rejection was overcome. The limitations of claim 8 have now been incorporated into claim 1, and the limitations of claim 18 have now been incorporated into claim 10. Also, claims 8 and 17 have been rewritten as independent claims. As such, all independent claims, as well as the dependent claims, should now be in condition for allowance. The prior art rejection should be overcome. Withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

Because the additional prior art cited by the Examiner has been included merely to show the state of the prior art and has not

been utilized to reject the claims, no further comments concerning these documents are considered necessary at this time.

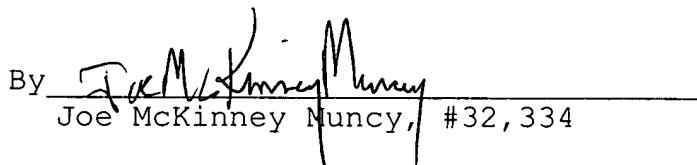
Favorable reconsideration and an early Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

In the event that any outstanding matters remain in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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